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Energy Secretary honors INL employees for nuclear energy and security research

IDAHO FALLS – Twenty Idaho National Laboratory employees received achievement awards from Energy Secretary Steven Chu last week for outstanding efforts supporting space nuclear research, nuclear safeguards and material removal.

The Department of Energy's 35th Anniversary and Secretary's Honor Awards program was held in Washington, D.C. with many of the INL award recipients watching a live video feed of the ceremony from INL's Materials and Fuels Complex.

"As the nation's 12th secretary of energy, I am honored to lead the Department and our dedicated employees and contractors, who are among the best minds in the world. Together we are creating cutting-edge technologies that will power and secure America's future," said Chu. "Today, we honor a select group of staff who surpassed even the highest standards of excellence, demonstrating great innovation, ability, and a commitment to public service."

Sixteen employees received recognition for their work supporting NASA's Mars Science Laboratory. The employees were part of a multilaboratory team that worked closely with NASA's Jet-Propulsion Laboratory to test, fuel, encapsulate and conduct safety analysis on a radioisotope thermoelectric generator power source to power the rover Curiosity. The rover is currently exploring Mar's Gale Crater area following a spectacular landing in early August.

Two employees were honored for their support leading up to March's Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, the largest nuclear security summit ever held. The award noted the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit brought together 53 heads of state and international organizations to discuss international cooperative measures to protect nuclear materials and facilities from terrorist groups.

Two employees were recognized for contributing to a three-year initiative with Argonne National Laboratory. The Nuclear Footprint Reduction and Deactivation Plan Team supported efforts to lower the operating costs for ANL's nuclear facilities through improved safety analysis and removing certain materials in storage.

INL was also honored for supporting the Uranium-233 Disposition Alternatives Analysis project along with DOE's Environmental Management Office, DOE's Office of Health Safety and Security, the Nevada Site Office and the Oak Ridge Office. The team was honored for extraordinary efforts to find cost-effective and technically viable alternatives for movement of Uranium-233 stored at Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

For their efforts, employees received a signed certificate from Chu. Three DOE-Idaho employees also received awards from the secretary.

INL is one of the DOE's 10 multiprogram national laboratories. The laboratory performs work in each of DOE's strategic goal areas: energy, national security, science and environment. INL is the nation's leading center for nuclear energy research and development. Day-to-day management and operation of the laboratory is the responsibility of Battelle Energy Alliance.

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—INL-12-026—

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